



Cheshire Academies Trust
Inspiring hearts and minds



Here, Children Thrive

**PART ONE MINUTES
OF THE LOCAL GOVERNING BODY MEETING – MEETING 8**

Date	Wednesday 26th June 2024 at 6.30pm
Venue:	Meeting Room, Boughton Heath Academy

Invited to Attend (Governors):	
Kate Lee (KL) Sally Sumnall (SS) Rob Herd (RH) Andrew Vaughan (AW) Muriel Breugelman (MB) Tyler McPherson-Hill (TMH) Mark Loughnane (ML) Daniel Knox (DK)	Co-opted governor/Chair of Governors Staff governor/Head of School Co-opted Governor Co-opted Governor Parent governor Staff Governor Parent Governor Parent Governor
Jon Lenton (JL) James Ferguson (JF) Mark Loughane (ML) Laura Paddock (LP)	Executive Headteacher Co-opted Governor Parent Governor Parent Governor
Also in Attendance:	
Lisa Williams (LW) Anne Lyons (AL) Diane Walley (DW) Debbie Tomkinson (DT)	Acting Assistant Headteacher School Business Manager Trust Business Manager Governance Director

AGENDA ITEM 1	WELCOME, APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Statutory) AND CONFIRMATION WHETHER MEETING IS QUORATE
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Discussion:	KL welcomed all to the meeting. The apologies of JL, JF, ML and LP were accepted. KL informed governors that she had received an email from Elaine Hall advising that she was stepping down as a local governor.
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AGENDA ITEM 2	DECLARATION OF PERSONAL & PECUNIARY/BUSINESS INTEREST (Statutory)
Discussion:	There were no conflicts of interest in relation of any of the agenda items and no new interests were declared.

AGENDA ITEM 3	EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE
	<p>Teaching and Learning</p> <p>LW was in attendance to provide governors with an update on writing.</p> <p>The writing curriculum intent comes from a starting point of speaking and listening as this provides a secure base for writing. The aim is that as children move through the school, they are able to speak and write fluently and communicate effectively to different audiences.</p> <p>Speaking and listening is planned into every lesson through active lessons such as Go, Go Mo where children either give an idea or get an idea and then move on which enables children to share their ideas. Spelling and grammar is a big focus and teachers choose a relevant objective from the national curriculum for their lessons. The Pitara framework has been successfully seen in books and pupil voice.</p> <p>There is a four-stage scheme in place for handwriting which is progressive and gives more structure to help improve handwriting for children who struggle with writing. The school uses Pathways to Write which has a range of diverse and inclusive texts and work has taken place on the mastery approach to handwriting. All children will have the same target but there can be differentiation if a child needs more support or challenge.</p> <p>The only difference in the early years is that whilst they use the pathways objectives they use different texts. This is because one text studied over a longer period of time does not work with younger children and so teachers have chosen texts with a focus on the early learning goals.</p> <p>There are a range of tools available to support any adaptations that children may need including support staff, phonics sound card mats, pencil grips and widget pictures to describe a word.</p> <p>Assessment of writing is through the use of target cards. Each term has a focus on a mastery 'key' and children need three ticks to show they have mastered that target. The older children are able to tick their own work and this is checked by teachers. The targets are adapted for those children with special educational needs (SEND) or those who have an individual education plan and each child has an individual personal target.</p> <p>There has been a big focus on editing and proof-reading to improve their work. LW has delivered team teach training workshops with children and staff.</p> <p>In assessing children's writing, teachers will first rank the children's writing without looking at the targets. From that point, teachers will use the objectives to determine which children are working at or above the expected levels. Teachers will also make notes on how each group is progressing. Assessment is overseen by either LW, SS or LJ who will look at a random selection of children's work.</p> <p>Trust moderation takes place twice yearly which provides an opportunity to share practice and allows the Literacy Company moderator to verify the work of teachers.</p> <p>There were 10 projects in the writing SQM relating to literacy including undertaking learning walks, team teach for editing and LW is in the process of researching the colourful semantics programme for children with SEND.</p> <p>Interventions are regularly reviewed by the senior leadership team who will judge if an intervention should continue. Planning in the early years has been amended away from the</p>

	<p>pathways to write programme and there are a number of interventions to help the younger children get ready for Y1. Last term, the explorers project was aimed at boys to encourage a boost in writing as there is still a gender gap and this was very successful. From September, Y5 boys who are strong in writing will 'buddy' with a Y2 boy.</p> <p>There is a clear link between reading and writing and if a child is a good reader, they tend to be a good writer and the school has put in targeted support, such as Lightning Squad, to boost reading.</p> <p>There have been discussions with teachers at Mill View about their approach to spelling and grammar as their results are slightly higher and, as a result, there will be a weekly session on grammar taking place at Boughton Heath.</p> <p>Q: When do children do joined up writing? A: As children go into KS2 they will have started joining up.</p> <p>Q: What is the reason for buddying with Y5 with Y2 children and not Y2 and Y3 children? A: As the Y5 children are older they are more mature and nurturing and it is important not to put the younger children off writing.</p> <p>Q: How often are assessment cards reviewed? A: It varies between classes, it can be every day if it is an independent piece of work and if, for eg, Y1 children sit on their own and produce writing, the teacher will have a look at their work.</p> <p>Q: Is everything on track after Covid? A: During Covid, feedback was that writing was the subject that parents couldn't teach at home and this did have an impact but there has been enough time to fill in any of the Covid gaps.</p> <p>Q: Is there any divide between the children that did access home learning and those that didn't? A: When the children first returned to school this was evident but this is not the case now.</p> <p>Q: How many of the SQM projects are complete? A: 80% of the projects are complete. The outstanding projects are the research on colourful semantics and the buddying project will begin in September.</p> <p>Q: How much will artificial intelligence play a part in the way that writing that is taught? A: LW has attended a conference and the expert said that 13-14 year olds are learning to use AI in the correct way. Currently teachers may use AI for writing a model answer and JL has set up an AI hub across the trust to teach the use of AI. The teaching of fundamental writing skills will be critical in successfully using AI in the first place.</p> <p>Governors noted that it was positive that boys' writing is being targeted and they welcomed the process of sharing learning across schools.</p> <p>It was agreed that the next LGB governor visit would be on 5th July with a focus on SEND and writing</p> <p>Governors thanked LW for her update and she left the meeting.</p>
	<p>ACTIONS</p> <p>Governor visit on writing and SEND to take place on Friday 5th July.</p>

AGENDA ITEM 4	HR/FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE
	Business Manager's Report

KL advised that she had met with AL, SS and JL to discuss the report in detail prior to the meeting. A governor had also submitted a number of questions via email which are appended to the minutes.

The Business Manager's report was circulated in advance of the meeting and AL and DW were in attendance to provide an overview.

2023-24 Outturn

The expected surplus at the end of the year is just under £15500 which is significantly more than was budgeted for. The school did receive more income than was budgeted for but staffing costs were higher than anticipated. The financial position of the kitchen and Heath Club has improved and the expected surplus at the end of the year is £15471 with a carry-forward of £106k and a total carry forward of £173k.

Q: There has been an improvement in the kitchen, is there any impact on the quality or ingredients used?

A: The biggest change to the kitchen provision was staffing which has reduced from three to two. The menu is regularly reviewed to ensure that the best value is provided for both children and the school. There have been some changes to suppliers and renegotiation of costs. There has been a change in butchers to a local butcher and local fruit and vegetable suppliers is used. The uptake for school meals continues to be good and there has been no change to the quality of the provision.

Q: Has there been any downside to the reduction of staff in the kitchen?

A: The greatest need was for staff as mid-day assistants and so it has worked well in transferring staff.

Q: Is there any benefit to making parents away of the measures that are taken in the kitchen to keep costs within the budget?

A: It could be useful to provide parents with more context and AL and DW to consider this.

Q: Why has the cost of Heath Clun increased to £14.70 next year – could this be reduced to £14.50?

A: The increase is a percentage increase and is in line with other schools but AL advised that she would consider this.

Q: Is there any financial training that governors could receive

A: The Chief Finance and Operations Officer will run resources management training for governors in the autumn term.

Q: In the three-year forecast the income for the Heath Club remains the same, should there be an inflationary increase?

A: Inflationary increases are included in other areas of the budget but it can be difficult to forecast for the club as it is dependent on the number of children attending. It is an area where a shorter view is taken with the budget for next year based on the numbers of children this year. Assuming that nothing changes, it is prudent to say that income levels will remain the same. The provision is regularly reviewed to ensure that it provides good value with excellent facilities.

Q: Is the published admission number for Y6 the same as for Reception?

A: Yes, the PAN is 30.

Budget 2024-25

Next year's budget has been designed with the staffing structure to support teaching and learning. 72% of the budget is spent on staffing costs. Within the budget there has been an assumption of a 3% increase in teachers' salaries and an increase of £1290 for support staff which has been recommended by employers and it is anticipated that this will be accepted by the unions. There is an increase in the forecast budgets for two years because of a growth in pupil numbers.

Q: Will any of these children have additional funding?

A: It is not thought so.

	<p>Q: Is any money put aside for staff absence? A: £10k is ring-fenced which can be used for staff absence or provides additional income if it is not used by the end of the year. This process works well across the trust and it is regularly reviewed but policies are expensive and the returns do not cover costs.</p> <p>To approve expenditure under the Scheme of Delegation</p> <p>There were no items of expenditure requiring approval under the Scheme of Delegation.</p> <p>Governors thanked AL for her report and she and DW left the meeting.</p>
	<p>RESOLVED: Governors recommended that the trust board approve the 2023-24 budget.</p>

AGENDA ITEM 5	PART ONE MINUTES OF MEETING –MAY 2024
Discussion:	The Part One minutes of the meeting of Wednesday 22 nd May 2024 were approved as a true and accurate record.
	RESOLVED: That the Part One Minutes – 22nd May 2024 be approved as a true and accurate record.

AGENDA ITEM 6	REVIEW OUTSTANDING ACTIONS
Discussion:	<p>Writing curriculum update to be included on the next agenda. COMPLETE</p> <p>Assessment link governor to complete a governor visit once the SATS results have been received. NOT DUE</p> <p>DT to request further information on how reserves are to be invested.</p> <p>Health and safety link governor visit to take place following audit. ML requested a H and S visit.</p> <p>DT to include SQM reporting onto the agenda for the Chairs meeting. COMPLETE</p>

AGENDA ITEM 7	VISION AND STRATEGY
	<p>Equality Objectives</p> <p>SS provided governors with an update on progress towards equality objectives.</p> <p>The Equality Objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To celebrate and embed the protected characteristics throughout the Boughton Heath curriculum within each year group. The school uses the No Outsiders curriculum and there will be No Outsiders weeks. Children have been looking at particular protected characteristics linked to the Paralympics and there are also discussions in assemblies. - To ensure all children receive the same educational and enrichment opportunities regardless of any context group or characteristic, narrowing any existing attainment / progress gaps. There has been an enhancement of the personal development offer throughout the school including extra curricula clubs and festivals. Teachers will track who attends clubs and Pupil Premium income is use to enable children entitled to Pupil Premium to attend paid-for clubs and festivals. The competitions that the school signs up to have different levels which enables children with SEND to take part in competitions and this has been very successful – as an example, children with SEND who took part in a curling competition got through to the finals. - To actively promote and embed positive attitudes and dialogue regarding equality, inclusivity and diversity into the school culture and ethos. This is achieved through the day-to-day teaching and learning. This has been further developed

	<p>through the introduction of the crew culture. Children are very open and are given the language to enable them to talk about matters that may be worrying them. Work is taking place with the trust's equalities lead to ensure the curriculum addresses diversity in history and geography so that children do not only learn about white British people.</p> <p>Q: It is positive that the school is starting to include non-traditional viewpoints into the curriculum, how do children learn about non-western narratives to avoid giving a western version of non-western stories?</p> <p>A: This is achieved through the work that has already taken place with the equalities lead and this comes through strongly in the history curriculum but there is a need to make sure staff have a full understanding so that they can deliver lessons effectively for children and can pass on the right information in the right way.</p> <p>Q: What is the role of the equalities lead, do they review the work at the school and make suggestions?</p> <p>A: Yes, and she provides support and direction on the right materials to use.</p> <p>Q: Is it possible that there could be learning from other schools in more multi-cultural areas of the UK?</p> <p>A: This is a good idea and something to consider.</p> <p>Q: Has any concern been expressed by parents in relation to gender recognition guidelines?</p> <p>A: All of the schemes of work have been shared with parents so they can see what is being taught and there have been no concerns.</p> <p>It was agreed that an update on the progress of the objectives could be included at the bottom of the report.</p>
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AGENDA ITEM 8	COMPLIANCE AND SAFEGUARDING
	<p>Safeguarding</p> <p>Governors received and noted the updated annual safeguarding report to governors.</p> <p>Health and Safety</p> <p>Health and safety to be included on the July agenda.</p>
	<p>ACTIONS</p> <p>Health and Safety to be included on the July agenda.</p>

AGENDA ITEM 9	GOVERNANCE
Discussion	<p>Governor Visit Reports</p> <p>The safeguarding governor visit report was received and noted by governors. KL had met with SS to go through the annual safeguarding report to governors and there were no areas of concern.</p> <p>The core curriculum link governor visit report was included with the papers for the meeting and there was a discussion about the Learning Without Limits programme and project-based learning which can be shared with the local community. As an example of this, children at Mill View have had a display at the Grosvenor museum and Y2 children created a café and served members of the community. The idea behind project-based learning is that subjects are linked and children have an aim for their learning. Work has begun on this at Boughton Heath with a design and technology project and a newspaper report on Neil Armstrong. The SQM will be discussed at the first meeting of the new year and KL has had discussions with JL and SS about the potential for opening a school nursery and this may be added as an SQM project.</p>

	<p>LGB Meeting Dates for 2024/25</p> <p>The meeting dates for 2024/25 were approved by governors.</p> <p>Review of Governance</p> <p>It was confirmed there had been no governor expenses in the current academic year. The impact of governance will be included in the annual impact statement which will be included on the agenda for the next meeting.</p> <p>Governor Training</p> <p>KL advised that she had updated her safer recruitment training. She also attended the CAT governance conference which was a very useful and informative morning. Janet Myers, Chair of the trust board, provided an introduction and there was a presentation from Dr Bill Snaith on the SQM and Andrea Curran, Professional Learning Director, provided attendees with an overview of the Learning Without Limits programme.</p> <p>KL also attended the talk to parents from Cheshire police which provided parents with very useful information.</p> <p>Succession Planning</p> <p>Succession planning has been discussed in KL's one-to-one meetings with governors. KL has another two years as a governor and so it is important to begin the process of succession planning. Governors were asked to consider if, in September, they would like to take on the role of Vice Chair with a view to taking on the role of Chair in the future.</p> <p>From September, the focus on governor recruitment will be on appointing a co-opted governor with finance experience.</p>
	<p>ACTIONS</p> <p>Succession planning to be included on the agenda for the next meeting.</p>

AGENDA ITEM 10	DATE OF NEXT MEETING
Discussion:	Wednesday 17 th July 2024 at 6.30pm

Appendix 1 – questions and answers on the finance report which were submitted via email:

We're seeing a £39,780 negative swing in the main school budget. What's gone wrong and are we confident that it isn't going to happen again?

As detailed in the report, the negative swing is predominantly down to staffing - notably the additional staffing required to support a number of extremely vulnerable children in school in relation to safeguarding and SEND. For the efficient education and safety of all concerned, we have had to increase staffing in these classes through appointment such as 1:1s - which are only part funded and the higher grade learning support mentor. In addition to this, we also had a lengthy supply costs in the Autumn term.

Why is the main school budget so up and down. What are the reasons for the inconsistency in this?

There are a number of reasons for this. This ranges from the number of pupils anticipated to be on roll (as pupil numbers are only recorded as at the time of the census in October). In October 2023 we had 216 on

roll, in October 2024 we anticipate having 223. This change alone equates to an increase of funding of over £32k. In addition to this, due to the needs of pupils as explained above, we have increased funding for a number of children in school relating to SEND, as well as a number of children who are now classed as pupil premium. It is for these reasons the budgets are so up and down.

It is clear that staffing costs are an issue, and I presume out of your control due to central funding allocations etc. If this is the case, then why is there high confidence that this is going to change significantly in 25/26 & 26/27?

Answered as above, question 2

It would appear that the reality is that the school is going to run at a loss for the foreseeable future. I presume that this is the picture for the majority of schools nationally.

I wouldn't agree that school is going to run at a loss for the foreseeable, rather that for 2024 - 25 the main school budget is in deficit (due to essential staffing) translating to a small overall deficit of just over £5k. Whilst there is always the chance this can be improved / affected further by things such as staff absence, mat leaves etc, I think it's important to note that 2025 onwards shows school in healthy surplus, as does 2026 - 27. Also, and very importantly, the carry forward is very healthy for each of the three financial years ahead which gives some safeguards against economic downturns should they occur. Had these carry forwards not been so healthy, I would not be posing the budget model proposed for 2024 - 25.

It looks like we're using the kitchen and Heath Club to prop up the main school budget. Is central funding really so poor that we need parents to prop up the school or is the school poor at managing how it spends the central funding? If the kitchen and Heath Club did not exist would the school be permitted to run at such a loss?

This was a question which was posed during an earlier LGB meeting. The success of Heath Club and the kitchen are their own stand alone budget lines, and rather than saying they are propping up the main school budget, I would argue they are offsetting it and allowing us to make significant investment to meet the needs of children. Should we not have had the healthy kitchen and heath club budgets, this would have resulted in us being unable to make such investments which would have meant vulnerable children, alongside the rest of their peers, not receiving the strong education that takes place at Boughton Heath.

Regarding central funding, I presume this refers to funding from the Trust as opposed to funding from the DfE. As a minimum, schools receive £4,610 per pupil from government and you will no doubt be more than aware for the calls for this funding to be increased. As a school in a lower deprivation area, we receive lower levels of additional funding such as pupil premium, and we have relatively low levels of funding due to SEND. Whilst I would always welcome additional funding from the government, the national funding formula is set as it is and we have to manage the budgets according to this - which we have done year on year at Boughton Heath very successfully - allowing us to offer a strong education whilst also investing in classroom expansions, building works and the environment.

Regarding funding from the central trust, again this is set for all schools across the trust. I personally feel the offer we get from the trust in regards to the training, services and support received is very good value for money.

Regarding the comment of 'is the school poor at managing how it spends the central funding' I would urge caution on statements such as this. As detailed throughout the report and this email, the spend of central funding at Boughton Heath has been carried out with the focus of delivering for the most vulnerable

children in school, whilst also ensuring financial security moving forwards. As is the national picture, we are having to adapt our practice and provision to meet an ever growing number of severe needs throughout different cohorts, whilst also battling a funding and economic climate which is incredibly challenging. To date, school has always delivered a healthy and planned budget and this is certainly what we anticipate moving forwards.

is the swing in kitchen budget realistic? A £9k surplus appears punchy, considering we previously expected a loss.

The swing is a result of active management from school where we identified the kitchen budget was problematic and took steps to resolve this. Such steps have involved taking a member of staffing in house to alleviate budget pressure and then reviewing procurement practices to get best value for money. It is pleasing these steps have had such an impact.